

Issue	<p>EPA Region 9 includes the strategically important U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); and Freely Associated States of Palau, Marshall Islands, and Micronesia. These remote islands, several thousand miles from the rest of Region 9, are important to US national security. The U.S.-affiliated Pacific islands have small populations, a high percentage of residents living in poverty, vulnerability to natural disasters, and unique legal relationships with the U.S.—making them different from the rest of Region 9 and requiring special consideration and attention.</p>
Background	<p>The Pacific islands are home to two major military bases on Guam (the closest US soil to Korea and China), and the main facility to test the United States anti-ballistic missile defense system (Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands). EPA partners with DOD and the Pacific islands to protect national security, and with local government to build capacity and address their most pressing needs: improving access to clean, safe water; increasing resilience to droughts, floods, typhoons and other natural disasters; enhancing joint preparedness for emergency response, and rehabilitating contaminated sites.</p> <p>EPA largely treats the U.S. territories as states, providing funding for local environmental programs and water infrastructure construction. EPA’s \$33 million dollars in annual grants support economic development in the islands, including major water system improvements and hundreds of jobs.</p> <p>EPA Region 9 uses Congressionally-authorized policies specific to the islands to provide administrative efficiency and flexibility, including consolidating grants from multiple funding sources to minimize administrative burdens. Region 9 coordinates technical assistance to the Pacific islands as an in-kind service, and uses enforcement, when necessary, as a tool to improve public health.</p> <p>Major accomplishments in the Pacific islands include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Island residents with access to safe water increased from 39% in 2003 to 82% in 2017. • Sewage spills on Guam were reduced by over 99% from 2003 to 2017. • Pollution from municipal dumps into waterways on Guam and Saipan was eliminated in 2016. • New cases of the disease leptospirosis in American Samoa have been nearly eradicated by eliminating wastewater discharge from small pig farms. • EPA supported construction of the first LEED Platinum building in the Pacific—the new headquarters for American Samoa EPA. • In American Samoa, EPA helped the outer islands of Ta’u and Ofu gain energy independence by switching from high-priced diesel to 100% renewable energy. • EPA helped the CNMI improve safe handling of unexploded ordnance left over from WWII. • Recycling rate in Guam increased 18% to 34% from 2011 to 2017, with EPA technical assistance.
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guam Governor Eddie B. Calvo • Guam EPA Administrator Walter Leon Guerrero • CNMI Governor Ralph DLG Torres • CNMI BECQ Administrator Eli Cabrera • American Samoa Governor Lolo Moliga • American Samoa EPA Director Ameko Pato
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA will provide technical assistance to American Samoa, CNMI, and Guam as they implement FY18 grants which include \$33 million to water utilities and environmental programs. • EPA will host the Pacific Islands Environment Directors Meeting at the Regional Office in San Francisco June 19-21, 2018.